

IDAN RAICHEL Biography

Brief

Idan Raichel – producer, keyboardist, lyricist, composer and performer. During a career spanning a mere 17 years, Idan has become not only one of the most successful artists in Israel but also one of Israel's leading music ambassadors abroad, with tours which included performances at some of the leading festivals as well as shows in the most prestigious venues, such as New York's Central Park Summer Stage, Apollo Theater, Town Hall and Radio City Music Hall, Los Angeles's Kodak Theater, the Sydney Opera House, Zenith in Paris, London's Royal Albert Hall and Vienna's Musikverein Concert Hall. audiences from a variety of cultures across Europe, in South & Central America, in Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Ethiopia, South Africa, Ghana, and Japan – and the list goes on. In addition, Idan has entered into exciting collaborations with many great artists, including American pop stars **India.Arie** and **Alicia Keys**, and artists who are household names in their own countries, such as Portugal's **Ana Moura**, **Celentano**, the Iranian singer **Golazin**, and Mali's **Vieux Farka Touré**.

Over the years, Idan has become an ambassador representing a world of hope in which artistic collaboration breaks down barriers between people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

In the albums he has produced to-date with The Project, as well as in the other artistic ventures with combined with lyrics in a variety of languages including Arabic, German, Spanish, Amharic, French and Hebrew, which worked its way into being part of the Israeli mainstream as well as into the hearts of the general public in Israel and overseas.

With The Idan Raichel Project, Idan has released four studio albums and a 3-CD set (which contains live concert recordings, songs that were not included in other albums and rare recordings of Raichel in the studio). Idan has also teamed up with Vieux Farka Touré, releasing two albums by the **Touré-Raichel Collective**, in addition to releasing three solo albums – one in December 2015, a 2-CD package of mostly “in concert” tracks in September 2017, and the third in January 2019. All the albums have been released worldwide.

In Israel, total album sales are approaching 700,000 units; there have been in excess of 2 million digital downloads, and tens of millions of paid-for streaming events. The number of “hits” on YouTube is around the 262 million mark as of June 2020.

Biography

Idan Raichel was born in 1977, in Kfar Saba, Israel, to a family with Eastern European roots, and although music was an important part of his upbringing, his parents did not place much emphasis on performing music from their particular cultural background. “I think the fact that I didn't have strong family musical roots is what made me so open to music from around the world,” says Idan.

Idan started playing the accordion (which he likes to call “*the uncoolest instrument ever*”) when he was 9 years old, and even at this young age was attracted to the exotic sounds of Gypsy music and tango. As a teenager, Idan moved to keyboards, and studied jazz in high school, which honed his skills at improvisation and working with other musicians. After completion of his military service, Idan soon

established himself as a successful backup musician and recording session player and worked with such major Israeli artists as Riki Gal, Ivri Lider and Mickey Kam.

Whilst accumulating experience working with other musicians, and having come to the conclusion that it was time to pursue a project that reflected his musical vision as a writer, composer and producer, Idan began working on a demo recording in a small studio he set up in the basement of his parent's home. He thought it would be a good idea to invite a number of different singers and musicians to participate, in order to better demonstrate his distinct style and the way in which he worked with a variety of artists.

Some 30 different singers took part in the recordings, most of them coming from an Ethiopian background. His love for the ever-developing technology, and his extensive curiosity about musical roots and authentic instruments, led Idan down various experimental paths not generally followed in Israel.

Idan showed his "musical portfolio" to the people at **Helicon Music**, who decided to release the recordings as an album.

November 2002 saw the release of "Bo'ee" {"Come With Me"}, the first single from the album "**The Idan Raichel Project**". The song, sung by Yair Ziv and Shiran Cohen in Hebrew and Amharic, was an entrancing blend of Ethiopian voices and introduced a fresh concept of "world music" that Idan subsequently carried through to the album. "Bo'ee" was an instant hit, taking Israeli radio by storm and catapulting Idan from obscurity to fame.

In December, after that one hit, Helicon released the full album – which shot to the top of the sales charts and stayed at #1 for months on end - giving birth to a top-selling band and a symbol of the power of music to bring people together

The hit singles "Medabrim Be'sheket" ("Speaking Softly") "Im Telech" ("If You Go") and "Hinach Yafah" ("You Are Beautiful") followed, and the audiences grew ever larger both in Israel and overseas. Sales of the album have reached almost Quadruple Platinum status in Israel, selling over 153,000 units.

In February 2003, the album "The Idan Raichel Project" was nominated ACUM's "*Album of the Year*", and in September 2003 Idan was named "*Man of the Year in Music*" at the "People of the Year" ceremony which was broadcast on national commercial television.

In October 2003 The Project was named as both "*Discovery of the Year*" and "*Band of the Year*", and the song "Im Telech" was "*Song of the Year*" on the charts of Reshet Gimmel and Galgalatz, the two most important music stations in Israel, with three other songs from the album featuring in the Top Ten. ACUM's figures for 2003 showed that "Im Telech" was the "most performed song of the year on radio and television.

As interest in the recordings grew, the demand for live shows increased. Given the number of musicians who participated in the recordings, it would have been impossible to have them all appear on stage, so Idan decided to pick a core group of performers, who were versatile and yet strong individual artists in their own right, to work and perform with him.

From the beginning, Idan saw the project as a collaboration between artists, each bringing their own musical culture and talents to the stage. The live show became symbolic of the album, as it brought

together a group of people of different backgrounds – yet each being equal to the others.

To-date, over 95 different singers from dozens of different countries and cultural backgrounds, spanning the ages 16 to 91, have participated in The Project's recordings and performances.

Parallel to Raichel's work on the second album, The Project went on their first tour - more than 100 performances up and down Israel.

In December 2004, **"Mi'Ma'amakim" ("Out Of The Depths")**, the first single and the title track of The Project's second album, was released. "Mi'Ma'amakim", performed by Raichel and Avi Vesa Vograss, repeated the success of "Bo'ee" topping the singles charts for a number of weeks.

About a month later, the album "Mi'Ma'amakim" was released. For this album Raichel got his inspiration from various ethnic sources, creating an album that embodies the essence of Israeliness – a diverse Israeli-Arab grouping of exiles. The album included two moving ballads sung by Shoshana Damari, Israel Prize Laureate and one of Israeli's legendary singers, which, as it turned out, were the last songs she recorded before her death in February 2006.

After the release of the album, the singles "Yesh Bi Od Co'ach" ("There's Still Strength In Me") performed by Din Din Aviv, "Millim Yaffot Me'Eleh" ("Nicer Words Than These") performed by Cabra Casay and Liora Isaac, "Mi'Kol Ha'a'havot" ("Of All the Loves") performed by Maya Avraham and "Shuvi El Beyti" ("Come Back To My Home") by Ilan Damti, The Project's lighting engineer, were released to the media.

The album was a huge commercial success, and in excess of 20,000 copies were sold over the first two days. As of the end of 2019, more than 146,000 albums have been sold in Israel alone.

Immediately after the release of the album, Raichel and the members of The Project embarked on a new tour which opened with 16 performances across the US.

In February 2005, "Out Of The Depths" was named ACUM's *"Album of the Year"* with the title song being voted *"Song of the Year"*.

In April 2005, The Project kicked off the "Mi'Ma'amakim" tour in Israel. With songs taken from both albums, there was great demand for the show both in Israel and overseas and 2005-2006 saw The Project appearing throughout the United States and Europe as well as at many of the major world music festivals, including "WOMAD" in England and Singapore, and "Cervantino" in Mexico.

In September, The Project was chosen as *the "Band of the Year"* on a number of radio stations including Reshet Gimel and Galgalatz (the IDF's radio station).

In January 2006, The Project was invited to perform in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The visit was an exciting and touching journey for two of The Project's members, Avi Vesa Vograss and Cabra Casay, both of whom are of Ethiopian origin. The trip was the subject of the documentary film "Black on White", directed by Tomer Heiman. Inspired by the journey, Raichel wrote and composed the film's theme song "Ha'baita Ha'loch Cha'zor" ("Travelling Home"), which was performed by Cabra Casay and released as a single in September 2007 to coincide with the screening of "Black on White" on Israeli national commercial television.

In May 2006, Raichel won the Landau Prize for the Performing Arts for his achievements in the field of Israeli music and his contribution to the advancement of culture. He chose to donate half of the prize money to Ichilov Hospital in gratitude for the devoted care the hospital's crew gave to Shoshana Damari in her final days.

The worldwide release, in November 2006, by the US-based label **Cumbancha** of an album of 12 tracks taken from The Project's first two Israeli albums ("The Idan Raichel Project" and "Out Of The Depths") introduced The Project to new audiences. Billboard Magazine called The Idan Raichel Project "*One of the most fascinating titles to emerge in world music this year...a multi-ethnic tour de force*". The New York Times selected the album as *one of the top world music releases of the year*, and media from Peru to Portugal were unanimous in their praise. The album also received nominations in the "Middle East & North Africa" and "Cross Culture" categories of the BBC Radio 3 Awards for World Music.

The Cumbancha release was distributed, through Putumayo, in over 60 countries

In June 2007, The Project appeared at the "Summer Stage" festival in Central Park, New York, in front of a huge audience, considerably in excess of the park's permitted capacity. That performance is still considered the one that attracted the greatest number of people during the festival.

In November 2007, The Project achieved 19th place (out of 150) in BBC Radio's European World Music chart.

Between December 2007 and February 2008 Raichel toured Israel with an acoustic show – "Playing Softly", with special arrangements of The Project's songs for grand piano, percussion, string instruments and ethnic flutes.

In April 2008, following a request from Galgalatz for a theme song for their celebration of Israel's 60th Independence Day, Raichel composed and released "Minee Kolech Mi'Bechi" ("Refrain Thy Voice from Weeping"), based on the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

In May 2008 Raichel performed to a full house at New York's famous Radio City Music Hall, and in July of that year Al Jazeera's English language channel devoted a special edition of their popular "One on One" programme to Raichel, where he was interviewed by the show's host Reese Kahan.

November 2008 saw the release of The Idan Raichel Project's third album "**Bein Kiroth Beiti**" ("**Within My Walls**"). Much of the album was recorded while Idan was on tour, during recording sessions in hotel rooms, backstage dressing areas, private homes and other impromptu settings. During his extensive travels, Idan met with scores of musicians from diverse backgrounds, and, ever the collaborator, he made sure to exchange musical ideas with them. Along the way, he recorded and co-wrote songs with Colombian singer **Marta Gómez**, Cape Verdean luminary **Mayra Andrade** and the silken-voiced **Somi** of Rwandan and Ugandan heritage.

The album included new songs in Hebrew, Spanish, Moroccan, Creole and Swahili and was produced by Raichel and Gilad Shmueli, his co-producer on most of the songs of The Project's first two albums. "Within My Walls", which was released on the back of just one instant hit single, "Chalomot Shel Acherim" ("Other People's Dreams"), has sold 109,000 CDs in Israel – more than the equivalent of five Gold Albums.

In the same month, The Project toured the United States, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, as well as performing in Chile within the framework of that country's 200th Anniversary celebrations.

The tour that followed the release of "Within My Walls" kicked off in January 2009. It was a dazzling success and filled halls for four consecutive years (2009 - 2013). As part of the tour, The Project took part in the 2009 "Isrotel Phaza Morgana Festival" which took place in Israel's Timna Park in September. For this performance, The Project hosted some of the guest artists who appeared on the third album - Martha Gomez, Somi and **Adama Yalumbi** from Mali.

In February 2009, Idan Raichel, together with Gilad Shmueli and Assaf Dar (the string arranger) won ACUM's "*Achievement of the Year*" award for the song "Chalomot Shel Acherim" ("Other People's Dreams") from the album "Bein Kirov Beiti".

That same year, The Project was named "*Band of the Year*" by Reshet Gimmel, Galgalatz and a host of local radio stations; Media Forest posted "She'eriot Shel Ha'Chaim" ("Scraps of Life") as "*The Most Played Song*" and The Project as "*The Most Played Band*" in their annual radio broadcast hit-parade, Channel 24 and Galei Zahal named The Project "*Band of the Decade*" and "Out Of The Depths" "*Song of the Decade*"; and The Project's first album was voted "*Album of the Decade*" and Idan was voted as "*Music Man of the Decade*" by Galgalatz.

In August, 2009, the editors at Amazon published their selection of the 100 Greatest World Music Albums of All Time, and The Project's first album "The Idan Raichel Project" came in at #75.

In January 2010 Idan and GRAMMY winner **India.Arie**, with whom he had been working closely for some time, performed together at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC in front of **President Obama** and his family on Martin Luther King Day. In December 2010 Idan and India performed their song "Gift of Acceptance" at the Nobel Peace Prize gala event in Oslo, Norway, and in August 2011 they appeared together at the dedication ceremony for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington DC. India.Arie and Idan toured the US together in October 2010 then again in September 2011 with their show "Open Door".

In May 2011, The Project's single "Imma, Abba Ve'Chol Ha'Shar" ("Mum, Dad and Everyone Else") was released, the song having been specially composed for Galatz's Remembrance Day programme "We'll Soon Become a Song".

In July 2011, the 3-CD 38-track package "**Ha'baita Ha'loch Cha'zor**" ("**Traveling Home**") was released, including live performances of many of The Project's hits as well as previously unreleased material, new songs, singles and rare tracks. To-date, sales are in excess of 77,000 sets in Israel.

2011 also saw The Project's return to the "Isrotel Phaza Morgana Festival", this time with a special production which included 30 musicians on stage hosting the singer Mayra Andrade from Cuba, the violinist **Karen Briggs** from the United States and the singer **Montelep** from Africa.

In January 2012 Raichel composed the music to lyrics which had been written by **Shimon Peres**, and he premiered "**Eyes of Beta Israel**" that month in the presence of Peres, who was the President of the State of Israel at the time.

A chance meeting with Malian guitarist **Vieux Farka Touré** (the son of the legendary Ali Farka Touré) led to the formation of **The Touré-Raichel Collective** and the recording of the acclaimed album "**The Tel Aviv Session**", which was released in February 2012. The result of an inspired afternoon jam session, the album was hailed by the media as "*a masterpiece*" (about.com), "*simply divine*" (Giant Step), "*deeply affecting*" (The Wall Street Journal), "*a cross cultural triumph*" (Time Out Chicago) and "*the best album this year*" (Pop Matters). The album reached the Number One spot on the iTunes World Music sales chart and peaked at number 2 on the Billboard World Music Chart. The Touré-Raichel Collective's tour of the USA and Canada in April 2012 was an unparalleled success with numerous sold-out shows and rave reviews.

In the years 2010-2012 Idan Raichel served as Artistic Director of the Israeli Opera's "World Music Festival" for two seasons. Within the framework of the Festival, Raichel brought together musicians from all over the world, including **Ana Moura** (Portuguese "Fado" singer), the duo **Amadou & Mariam** from Mali, **Richard Bona** -the Cameroonian bassist, Spain's **Concha Buika**, the all-female choir **Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares** and Vieux Farka Touré. In addition, India Arie and Raichel brought their "Open Door" show to the 2011 festival.

In June 2012 The Project was invited to give a special guest appearance at the Israel Opera's summer festival which takes place annually at the foot of Masada. International guests included **Andreas Scholl** from Germany, Colombia's Marta Gómez and the Malian kora player, **Mamadou Diabaté**.

In August 2012 Raichel was amongst those chosen by HuffPost as "*People Shaping the Culture of the Middle East*".

At the end of 2012, The Idan Raichel Project set out for a tour in Africa and India (Rwanda, Ghana and Angola, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore).

In January 2013, "Home, Back and Forth", a documentary film about the project, was screened on Israel's national commercial television channel.

In March 2013, after two successful singles, "Achshav Karov" ("Closer Now) and "Ba'Lyala" ("At Night"), "**Reva Le'Shesh**" ("**Quarter to Six**"), The Project's fourth studio album, was released, featuring guest appearances by Ana Moura from Portugal, singing a duet with Raichel with words in Hebrew and in Portuguese, the talented Palestinian-Israeli singer Mira Awad, with whom Raichel had worked in the past, singing in Arabic, Andreas Scholl, one of the great countertenor's in the world singing in German, Colombia's Marta Gómez, who was launched on Israeli radio thanks to her singing on the song "Todas Las Palabras" from the album "Within My Walls", and Vieux Farka Touré, Idan Haviv (who had worked with Raichel on "Mum, Dad and Everyone Else" and Amir Dadon (vocalist on the huge hit "She'eriot Shel Ha'Chaim" ("Scraps of Life") re-joined The Project with guest appearances on "At Night" and "Chaim Pshutim" ("Simple Life"), respectively.

As always, Raichel also included new voices on the album, among them: Tamir Nachshon, in the song "Closer Now" (Tamir's involvement with The Project came about from a chance meeting with Raichel at a bar in Tel-Aviv) and Yishai Ribo (a religious singer who got through to Raichel with his moving personal story and tremendous talent) in the song "Or Ka'ze" ("A light Such As This"). In June, the 16-track album was released in the US and Europe, and in August 2013 the instrumental version of the album was released on digital platforms worldwide.

The album "A Quarter to Six" was among the ten best-selling albums in iTunes world music chart, spent nine months at the top of the album sales chart in Israel and has sold in excess of 123,000 units in Israel (Triple Platinum +).

In her review of 4th June 2013, Michelle Morgante of the Associated Press wrote: "*The idea that one could create a cohesive album by pulling together unique voices singing in different languages and from a variety of musical traditions would seem daunting. Yet this challenge is what keyboardist and composer Idan Raichel has embraced and brought to fruition.*"

In March, 2013, Idan and The Project were honored with an invitation to give a private, after dinner concert for President Barack Obama at Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu's** official residence.

In July of that year, world-renowned pop star **Alicia Keys** invited Raichel on stage for a special duet during her show in Tel Aviv,

In September 2013 the end-of-year accolades saw The Project named as "*The Most Played Band*" (Media Forest airplay chart), Idan as "*Person of the Year in Music*" and "At Night" as "*Song of the Year*", with "Closer Now" in second place." (Galgalatz and Ynet),

November 2013 was a special month for Raichel, who became a father for the first time with the birth of his daughter, Philippa Helena Damaris Raichel, whom he brought into the world with his partner Damaris Duval.

In February 2014, Raichel won ACUM's "*Composer of the Year*" award for the album "Quarter to Six". He donated the prize money to the "Hadasim" boarding school where he once worked as a youth leader.

Later that month Raichel left for a series of shows in Europe, and on his return he launched the "Quarter to Six" tour in Israel, where The Project played to in excess of 100,000 people. This was followed by a tour in the USA, Canada and Mexico.

In June 2014, Raichel was named as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world by the Jerusalem Post.

That same month Raichel released a new single, this time in French - "**Petit Roi**" sang by Tzahi Halevi.

The Project's tour in Israel included a performance in June 2014 at the Masada Opera Festival in an unforgettable performance with a number of guest artists including **Adama Biluio** from Burkina Faso, and then reached a new peak when, in July 2014, in cooperation with "Yoter" the association for the Wellbeing of Israel's Soldiers, they held a particularly moving performance in Tel Aviv's Hayarkon Park in front of a crowd of 20,000 soldiers

On 27th & 28th June Idan Raichel joined **Kayah**, one of Poland's top singer-songwriters, on stage during the "European Culture Stadium" concert in Rzeszów, Poland.

In September 2014, Raichel won, for the second year running, Galgalatz's nomination as "*Man of the Year in Music*", The Idan Raichel Project was named "*Band of the Year*" on the Walla and Mako news websites, the tv station Channel 24, and most regional radio stations. On Media Forest's broadcast

performance chart The Project was named once again "*The Most Played Band*".

Idan's collaboration with Alicia Keys deepened in September 2014, when she invited him and Palestinian singer and *qanun* player **Ali Amr** to join her on stage at the Global Citizen Festival in New York's Central Park. The event featured **Jay Z, Beyoncé, Sting, No Doubt** and **Carrie Underwood**, and appearances by numerous global dignitaries and world leaders. In front of an audience of 70,000, Keys, Raichel and Amr performed "We Are Here," a new song Keys wrote to unite her audience in a global effort for peace, and to encourage young people to play an active role in making the world a better place. The event was streamed live on NBCNews.com and a prime-time concert special was aired on NBC, hosted by Tamron Hall.

On September 30, 2014, **The Touré-Raichel Collective** released their second album, "**The Paris Session**". While "The Paris Session" was the result of the same freeform approach that was used in the first album, this time around they decided to feature more songs with vocals, a wider range of instrumentation, and appearances by musician friends such as Senegalese artist **Daby Touré** on bass, Israeli trumpeter **Niv Toar**, and Malian singer **Seckouba Diabate**. Farka Touré and Raichel had honed their interplay over the course of multiple tours together, but the album possessed the same spontaneous, heartfelt magic as its predecessor. Following the release of "The Paris Session" The Touré-Raichel Collective went on a worldwide tour, which included 14 performances across the United States, and culminated with a performance at the New Morning in Paris, France

During September-October 2014, The Project toured the Far East for the first time, with shows in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan

In November 2014 Alicia Keys praised Idan in a video she created to commemorate his selection for the 2014 MTV Role Model Award. "*This is an amazing, amazing award,*" Keys said, "*which is what you are. But really what you are is just an incredible human being who bridges cultures and promotes tolerance, which there's nothing more important than you and your mission and your work. So congratulations because you inspire me all the time.*"

On January 12, 2015, Raichel joined French superstar **Patrick Bruel** and Moroccan singer **Youness El Guezouli** on stage at L'Opéra in Paris to sing "Pourquoi ne pas y croire..." ("Why Not Believe") in French, Arabic and Hebrew. The symbolic significance of the performance was especially relevant since it took place less than a week after the Charlie Hebdo attacks.

Throughout 2015, Raichel continued to perform around the world both with The Project as well as giving solo piano performances with a variety of guest artists. .

In May 2015, Idan's family grew with the birth of a second daughter, Salome Cesaria Damaris Raichel.

In June 2015, The Idan Raichel Project hosted Portugal's **Antonio Zambujo** and Cuba's **Danay Suarez** at an international music weekend held at the Ashdod amphitheatre and at Tel Aviv's Hangar 2.

August 2015 saw Raichel appearing with Andeas Scholl at a prestigious music festival in Germany – they subsequently appeared together in Tel Aviv in November; and in September Raichel and The Project appeared at the MITO Settembre Musica festival in Milan with the legendary **Ornella Vanoni**, which was followed by an appearance with the Touré-Raichel Collective at the Jazz a la Villette festival in Paris.

In September 2015, Media Forest named The Project "*The Most Played Band*" over the first ten years of their operation. In the same month The Idan Raichel Project's eponymous first album was released on vinyl.

In December 2015 The Idan Raichel Project toured Japan for three weeks, and Raichel participated in the "United Pianos" project organized by the Israeli delegation to the UN under the title "Let's Speak More Music." Eleven well-known pianists from eleven different countries performed Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf". The project was filmed, and released in the name of promoting tolerance and unity through music.

Following the release of the "Quarter to Six" album and the birth of his second daughter, Raichel started on a new album – his first solo album, working in the home studio at his parents' house, where he had recorded The Project's first album.

The album represents a turning point for the global music star: an opportunity to take stock of the past, ponder love, life, and the importance of his family – his partner, Damaris Duval, and their two young daughters. The result – an album of mostly gentle songs including the successful singles "Ma'agalim" ("Circles"), "Lifney She'yigamer" ("Before It Ends"), "Ha'Yad Ha'chama" ("The Warm Hand"), "Ga'agua" ("Longing") and "Be'chamesh Shniyot" ("In Five Seconds") – a song inspired by the life of Emmanuel Moreno, a Lieutenant Colonel in one of the Israel Defense Forces' most elite units, who fell in combat. The song featured **Hassan Hakmoun**, the Moroccan sitir player.

The album "**Ha'Yad Ha'Chama**" ("**At the Edge of the Beginning**") was released in Israel on 3rd December, 2015, and around the world on 22nd January 2016, with the instrumental version of the album being released on digital platforms worldwide in June. In light of the advance orders in Israel, the album attained "Gold" status even before its release, and went "Platinum" four months after release.

Raichel's February-March 2016 European tour included a sold-out show in Vienna's legendary Musikverein Concert Hall, and featured various guest artists including Zimbabwe's **MuZuluArt**.

In May 2016, Raichel was presented with the "Unsung Hero Award" by **Martin Luther King III**, the son of the iconic human rights leader **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, in recognition of his service and leadership in achieving human dignity, racial equality, and racial harmony for Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to Israel. This was the first time that the prize was awarded to a non-US citizen.

On Israel's 68th Independence Day, a number of radio stations, including Radio 102, and the website "ynet" aired an "Idan Raichel Special" during which they played the 30 most-loved songs from Idan's 15-year career, as selected by the listeners. The song "Mi'Ma'amakim" ("From the Depths") was voted #1, followed by "Chalomot Shel Acherim" ("Other People's Dreams") and "Im Telech" ("If You Go") in third place.

Following a series of small, intimate shows in the USA, and 20 concerts around Israel, Raichel brought his solo show "Raichel – Piano – Songs", which had developed out of the material on the "At the Edge of the Beginning" album, to a week of "sold out" concerts at the Shuni Amphitheater in June 2016.

On 7th July, 2016, within the framework of the annual B'nai B'rith World Center awards for journalism, established a quarter of a century ago by the late Wolf and Hilda Matsdorf, Idan was given a Special Citation, established to honor performing artists who have fostered closer relations between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora

On 17th September 2016, as part of the city of Sofia's celebration "Faith, Hope and Love", The Project performed at the Tole-Fest, on stage in the world-famous Nu Boyana Film Studios. The Project was joined on stage by Marta Gómez as well as a number of local Bulgarian musicians playing on traditional Bulgarian instruments. In the same month Raichel appeared as a guest artist at the show given in Israel by the well-known Greek singer **Nikos Vertis**.

Another unique performance took place at the end of that month when Idan Raichel, along with members of The Project, performed Raichel's songs together with the **Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra**, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Jerusalem Foundation.

In October 2016 the well-known Italian duo **Mina & Celentano** released an Italian version of "Ma'agalim" ("Circles") {from Idan's solo album "At the Edge of the Beginning"}. The song - "Amami Amami" - was the first single from the duo's new album and reached the #1 slot on iTunes Italy.

As part of a tour in South America in November 2016, Raichel and some of the other members of The Project were accompanied by "**21 Ensemble**", an orchestra from Buenos Aires. In addition to the shows in Argentina, Raichel also appeared in Brazil and Uruguay – all concerts being "sold out" well ahead of the performance date.

In November 2016, the program "A Reason for A Party" hosted former President Shimon Peres together with Raichel. This was the last interview that Peres gave before his death.

In December 2016 yet another melody of Raichel's was recorded by another artist, this time, a Persian-language version of "Sabe Deus" (from the "Quarter to Six" album) by the Iranian artist **Golazin**.

At the end of 2016 the album "At the Edge of the Beginning" was included in The J.P. Morgan #NextList2017 "Your lens on the undiscovered and the intriguing—informative reads, new experiences and inspiring music selections" and described as "*an intimate portrait of all the hope, excitement and anxiety of starting a grand, brand new phase of life as husband and father.*"

In February 2017, at a Gala Evening at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art to celebrate the Museum's flag-ship exhibition "Regarding Africa – Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism", Raichel was presented with a special award in recognition of his contribution in bringing peoples together through music.

In April 2017 the Polish singer Kayah released "Po-Co" by Kayah feat. Idan Raichel, with music composed by Raichel.

In the meantime, the "Raichel – Piano – Songs" tour became a huge success. The show, in which Raichel at last realised his dream of getting close up to his audiences and presenting his songs in their original format of piano and voice, ran for 150 shows – in Europe, the USA, South America and, of course, Israel, where Raichel wrapped out the summer tour with 17 successive dates at the Shuni Amphitheater.

All the shows at Shuni were recorded, and the best and most moving of the recordings were released on a new 36-track album- "**Raichel – Psanter- Shirim**" ("**Raichel – Piano – Songs**") - which also included "To Stay" a new instrumental track, new versions of some of Raichel's biggest hits, songs which he composed for other artists, and some special versions – from the rehearsal studio or recorded with an

orchestra. Raichel decided to round the album out with a new song called "Lisloach Ve'Lishkoach" ("To Forgive and to Forget"). The album was released in September 2017.

In November 2017 Cuban songstress Danay Suarez's album "Palabras Manuales" – which included a duet with Raichel on a new version of "Closer Now" {"Achshav Karov" from the "Quarter To Six" album}, with lyrics by Suarez – was nominated for a Latin Grammy award as *"Album of the Year"*.

The summer of 2018 saw the launching of a multidisciplinary festival, Raichel's brainchild, at the Live Park Amphitheater in Rishon LeZion. The festival ran for four days blending music, food and art alongside a few special appearances by The Idan Raichel Project with its new line-up of personnel. The idea for the festival grew out of Raichel's desire to share facets of life that he enjoys with his ever-growing audience. The festival included a culinary area under the direction of the innovative chef Yuval Ben Neriah, an exhibition of photographs by Ziv Koren, known worldwide for his daring and breathtaking documentary projects, and a stage for performances by exciting less-well-known musicians.

Due to its great success, the festival returned in September 2018 – and then twice more in 2019. In the winter of 2018 Raichel took part in Israel's "Freestyle Festigall", the show being built around a selection of his compositions.

January 2019 saw the worldwide release of the new **album "Ve'Eem Tavo'ee Elay" ("And If You Will Come to Me")**, which included 6 singles that had been released during 2017-2018. The album features guest musicians from Japan, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Cuba and India, the African guitar wizard **Bombino**, Cuban GRAMMY nominee Danay Suarez, Israel's Berry Sakharof and Zehava Ben – and a special new studio track with the reunited Idan Raichel Project.

The packaging for the album included ten postcards – on each one a drawing by the Ethiopian artist **Gashahun kassahun** on one side and on the other side the lyrics of one of the songs.

The album's title track ("Ve'Eem Tavo'ee Elay" in Hebrew) has already become one of Idan's biggest hits ever in Israel, with over 28 million streams on YouTube alone, and the singles from the album have racked up a total of 59 million YouTube plays as of June 2020.

Idan supported the release of "And If You Will Come to Me" with four shows in Tel-Aviv's Menora Mivtachim arena, followed by an extensive international tour in March 2019 visiting France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and the US.

To celebrate Israel's 71st Independence Day, Galgalatz, Israel's major music radio station, initiated the recording of "**Shevet Achim Ve'Achayot**" ("**A Tribe of Brothers and Sisters**"), composed by Idan Raichel with lyrics by Doron Medali and featuring some of Israel's top artists. The song became a major hit, with 33 million streams on YouTube as of June 2020.

In May, Idan performed "Bo'ee", one of the most popular of all his songs, with a special line-up of musicians as part of the 64th Eurovision Song Contest, held in Israel. May 2019 also saw the release of a new song, "**Achshav Nish'arnu Shney'nu**" ("**Now There Are Only The Two Of Us**").

In September the national radio station KAN Gimmel rounded out the Hebrew year with their Decade of Music chart – naming The Idan Raichel Project as *"The Group of the Decade"*.

October 2019 saw the release of the song "**Katoov Mi'lemala**" ("**Written From Above**").

In December 2019, two projects in which Raichel was involved saw the light of day: the song "**Lumière**", composed by Raichel with lyrics by Maxime Le Sloguais and Raichel was recorded by Raichel and the Canadian singer **Beyries**, and was chosen as the theme song for the tv series "The Attaché"; and Raichel's recording of "**Ze Be'Emet Ma She'Ani Omeret**" ("**what I am saying is true**"), which he co-wrote with Yaya and Ran Cohen Aharonov, was included in the successful children's tv show, "Yeldey Beit Ha'Etz" ("Children of the Tree House").

The same month Raichel released a new single "**Im Rak Taskimi**" ("**If You Will Only Agree**"), sung by Yehoram Gaon, Israel Prize Laureate and icon of Israeli music. The release coincided with Gaon's 80th birthday. The lyrics were written by **Idit Pank**; music composed and arranged by Raichel.

After a break of more than five years, February saw the release of a new single by The Idan Raichel Project – "**Eizeh Yom Tov**" ("**A Good Day**") featuring the unique, beautiful voice of Nasrin Kadri.

In early 2020 the "Israeli Hour Theatre for children and youth" produced a show called "Chalomot Shel Acherim" ("Other People's Dreams"). The musical is based on a collection of Raichel's songs and deals with achieving one's dreams, self-esteem, success and failure.

On 3rd March, 2020, the song "**Feker Libi**" – composed by Raichel and with lyrics by Doron Medali – was chosen by a panel of judges and the viewers' votes as the song which would represent Israel at the 2020 Eurovision Song Contest in Holland. Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus Covid 19, the 2020 Eurovision Song Contest has been cancelled.

On the 14th March Raichel gave the opening concert in a series of advertisement-less shows presented by Keshet TV and Zappa, scheduled for the corona lockdown period, and aimed at boosting the country's morale. The show drew ratings of 14.5%, a record for. The around midnight timeslot

During the time of the corona virus lockdown, Raichel started broadcasting from his studio in his Tel Aviv home, and gave a concert, produced by the Jewish Agency and streamed internationally through the Agency's facebook page, facebook pages associated with the Agency and, of course, Raichel's facebook page.

Facebook was used once again when on the Eve of Passover, Raichel gave a special concert for medical staff and patients in hospitals, streamed on his facebook page and the facebook pages of nine hospitals in Israel.

In early April 2020 it was announced that Idan Raichel has been chosen to light one of the 12 torches that are lit at the opening ceremony of Israel's Independence Day. "*Each year, the chosen 12 women and men represent as many segments of Israeli society as possible, across the many socio-ethnic strands, and the various strata of cultural, civilian and military life here. With the former in mind, it makes perfect sense to hand one of the torches to a musician who has championed multiculturalism and mutual acceptance, both here and across the globe for close to 20 years.*" (Jerusalem Post)

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